

Love, Laughter and Limits: Raising Mentally Healthy Children

Parents - you are the most important people in your child's life. You're responsible for physical safety, health, emotional well being, and experiences that enable your child to develop self-control, respect for others, broad interests, and a host of other characteristics. That's a lot to accomplish! Here are some tips to help you accomplish the most important job you will ever have - raising your children.

- Provide unconditional love
- Provide a safe home
- Be aware of developmental stages:
- Encourage your child to express his or her feelings
- Promote mutual respect and trust
- Listen to your child
- Set a good example.
- Encourage your child's talents and accept limitations
- Appreciate your child's uniqueness
- Foster your child's independence and self-worth
- Discipline constructively, fairly and consistently
- Show approval for positive behaviors
- Teach kindness and cooperation

Signs of emotional distress

Infants and toddlers

- Failure to grow and thrive
- Too much or too little crying
- Delayed motor activity

Pre-school children

- Restlessness
- Frequent physical complaints
- Sadness unrelated to any loss

Older children and adolescents

- Social isolation
- Significant weight gain or loss
- Delinquent behavior
- Sudden changes in behavior or school performance
- Feelings of hopelessness

If you notice any of these symptoms in your child for two or more weeks, it may be time to seek professional help.

Your child's mental health matters

Just like adults, children can and do experience mental disorders, and the number of families affected is large. Untreated childhood disorders can have serious consequences for the child, the family and the

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What You Need to Know...



community. The child may have trouble getting along with others, perform poorly in school, have violent outbursts, or continue to have mental health problems as an adult.

Both children and families can benefit from professional help. Early diagnosis and treatment of mental disorders could mean a fast recovery and fewer long-term problems.

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